Amendments to the Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A heterobifunctional compound represented by the formula:

$$CH_2=CZ\text{-}CO_2\text{-}POLY\text{-}W\text{-}POLY'\text{-}Q$$

where

Z represents H or alkyl;

POLY and POLY' are poly(alkylene oxide) groups that can be the same or different and are represented by the formula $-(CH_2CHRO)_n-CH_2CHR-$ in which R is H or alkyl, and n ranges from about 10 to about 4000;

Q represents a functional group; and

W represents a hydrolytically unstable linkage.

2. (Original) The compound of Claim 1, wherein POLY and POLY' are poly(ethylene glycol).

3. (Currently Amended) The compound of Claim 1, wherein W comprises a hydrolyzable covalent bond selected from the group consisting of carboxylate esters, orthoesters, imines, acetals, peptide bonds, ~~and disulfides~~ phosphate esters, and oligonucleotides.

4. (Currently Amended) The compound of Claim 1, wherein Q is selected from the group consisting of aldehydes, carboxylic acids, ~~active esters, active carbonates,~~ sulfonate esters, amines, hydrazides, orthopyridyl disulfides, ~~and~~ thiols, carbonate esters, N-succinimidyl esters, isocyanates, alcohols, and epoxide.